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STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR IN UKRAINE

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 26 May 2022

Mr. chairman,

Norway is aligned with the statement made by the European Union but allow me some remarks in my national capacity.

I also welcome Ambassador Villadsen back to the Permanent Council. We acknowledge the challenging circumstances that the Project Co-Ordinator has been and is working under. We want to thank Ambassador Villadsen and his team for the contribution made to evacuate OSCE staff when the brutal Russian invasion started. We also thank ambassador Villadsen and his team for the agility shown to adapt to circumstance. It is indeed praiseworthy that they continue to deliver on their programmes and projects in all three OSCE dimensions, in line with the mandate and now in temporary premises, and we appreciate being briefed about this.

We support the intention to increase Ukraine's humanitarian mine action capacity and educating people on the risk of mines, not least sensitizing children to the dangers of various types of explosive ordnance. There are a lot of mines and unexploded ordnance left. We also hear testimonies of vicious booby-traps left by Russian forces. The scale of demining work required may seem insurmountable. We agree that the OSCE has a future role to play in mine action in close cooperation with other relevant actors.

The PCU has now been working in Ukraine for 23 years and has accumulated an enormous experience and expertise. We agree with ambassador Villadsen that there will still be a need for continued OSCE engagement in Ukraine when this senseless war is over. We foresee that the PCU will have a central role and look forward to supporting the mandate extension in June. I wish ambassador Villadsen and his team all success in their continuous work.

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